

## WE NEED TO ESTABLISH LOCAL, INDIGENOUS, NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES

By Pastor James W. Crumpton

There are more missionaries giving out the Gospel in more countries today than at any time since our Commander and Chief, the Lord Jesus Christ, gave His fourfold order! But many are not going about this eternal, important business the New Testament way.

Some go, preach the Gospel, see souls saved, baptize them, and move on to other areas. One missionary told me that over a period of years he covered one whole continent, won 5,000 to Christ, and baptized them. I asked him if he trained the new converts and organized local churches. He said that he did not; he just considered it his business to lead them to Christ and baptize them. Yet, our Lord told us to lead them to be saved, baptize them, and teach them all things which He commanded us.

And I do not read anything about some being sent to only do part of the Commission. It is good to get souls saved. Amen and amen! But how about the responsibility of making disciples and organizing local, indigenous, New Testament churches?

Others do mission work from the standpoint of social betterment. They do more Americanizing than evangelizing. Usually they establish compounds, schools, hospitals, agricultural projects, and maybe after ten or fifteen years, a local church which is pastored by the missionary himself. They so often distrust the nationals, counting them too ignorant to lead in local churches.

And there are variations of these methods and even other methods that still others use. Let us consider the New Testament way. The first thing that comes to our attention is --

### PREACHING

They went everywhere preaching. Take Paul for example. He preached in the homes, on the streets, by the river, in the jails, in the synagogues, on the ship, in the courtrooms, in the school of Tyrannus, and anywhere else where he was afforded opportunity.

These preachers of the New Testament preached that men are sinners, lost, and Hell-deserving. They told of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, providing forgiveness of sins to those who repent and trust Him as personal Saviour. "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:21).

When the Gospel was preached, souls were saved. Then they baptized them (immersed them in water in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit). "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them

about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:41). "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straightway." (Acts 16:33).

After preaching, leading people to Christ, and baptizing them, they then went about --

## MAKING DISCIPLES

When we get folk saved, there remains much to be done. A great weakness is seen in churches in that they lead folk to Christ but do not make disciples. One of the real reasons that missionaries do not establish local, indigenous New Testament churches on the mission fields is that they lead folk to Christ but do not make disciples. In the New Testament, they made disciples. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42).

"But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples." (Mark 4:34).

Making disciples is what Jesus meant by saying, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..." (Matthew 28:20).

The next thing that they did was that of --

## ESTABLISHING CHURCHES

Too many missionaries have mistakenly called "preaching stations" churches.

It sounds good, seems like real success, and encourages the supporting churches. But a New Testament church is a lot more than merely a "preaching station."

New Testament churches were self-supporting. They did not depend on foreign money, brought by the missionaries, to meet the expenses of their work.

These churches were also self-governing. The missionaries believed that the Holy Spirit could teach and lead nationals who had been saved. National men became pastors, deacons, missionaries, etc. It is also important to note that the New Testament churches, established by missionaries in those days, were self-propagating. They, the saved people, went about leading others to Christ and establishing other churches in the area and neighboring regions.

The missionaries trained the converts in responsibility, not in dependence upon themselves.

Paul was not busy establishing clinics for Dr. Luke, or colleges and seminaries, but New Testament churches. It is good to have clinics and schools, but the churches should come first. And these other projects should be ministries of the local churches and not independent projects of the missionaries.

Some missionaries act as if they were going to set up a corporation for some big oil company or a factory for some shoe firm. They arrive at the place of their calling, have a meal, sleep a few hours, and write a hurried prayer letter for churches to send money to buy some land and build a building. They miss the fact that in New Testament, missions employed such a simple --

## METHOD

I do not read anything in the New Testament about Paul writing back to Antioch asking the people to make a sacrificial offering to help him build the dear people at Thessalonica or Philippi a church house. Do you? He looked for sinners, led them to Christ, discipled them, and organized churches (who often met in homes). "And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house." (Philemon 2). "The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house." (1 Corinthians 16:19).

In fact, in all of his missionary journeys and in all of the mission work that he did, Paul never once mentioned church houses, much less solicited funds with which to build them. Today, prayer letters often go out from missionaries soliciting funds to build church houses. And some Missions circularize the churches all over the United States and elsewhere seeking to raise millions of dollars to build church houses at home and abroad.

Why is it done so differently than the method of the New Testament?

The New Testament method was so simple, yet, so effective... Paul did not write to get support for Timothy, his son in the ministry, either from Jerusalem or Antioch. And we still have a lot of God's servants today who work long, hard hours to prepare for the ministry to which God has called them. You cannot stop a man, if he is called of God! And this method should be the same in Brazil, Korea, Japan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, etc.

Let us move on in our thinking to the most important element in New Testament missions. Here I refer to the --

## POWER

All that I have said about New Testament missions is vain and helpless apart from the power of the Precious Holy Spirit. A missionary may go, use the simple New Testament method, and do everything just like clockwork, and be a complete failure, if he does all of this apart from the power of the Precious Holy Spirit!

In the early churches, they preached, won folk to Christ, baptized them, discipled them, organized churches, and in such simplicity; yet, it was all through the power of the Holy Spirit. It was not through some cheap or carnal man-made methods. The Holy Spirit

moved in the missionary, in his hearers, convicted, converted, and taught as He, the Person, used the instrument, the Word of God, as it was preached and taught.

Oh, blessed Lord, help us to do missions the New Testament way.

"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." Acts 10:44

"So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus." Acts 13:4

"And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." 1 Corinthians 2:3-5